



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

May 22, 1998

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW  
Room 222  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Proposed Revision of Maximum Collection Amounts for Schools and Libraries and  
Rural Health Care Providers, Public Notice, CC Docket No. 96-45, DA 98-872

Dear Ms. Salas:

Enclosed you will find the original and five copies of the letter from Richard Riley, Secretary, U.S. Department of Education, to Chairman William Kennard in the above-referenced proceeding. In addition, three copies have been sent to Ms. Sheryl Todd of the Accounting Policy Division, Common Carrier Bureau. An exact copy of the letter has also been filed electronically at: <<http://www.fcc.gov/e-file/ecfs.html>>.

Please direct any questions to the undersigned. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Y. Winnick  
Deputy General Counsel  
for Program Service

Enclosures

NOTED FOR FILE  
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE SECRETARY

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Honorable William Kennard  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW, Room 814  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Proposed Revision of Maximum Collection Amounts for Schools and Libraries  
and Rural Health Care Providers, Public Notice, CC Docket No. 96-45,  
DA 98-872

Dear Chairman Kennard:

I am writing to respond to your question about the level of funding for the E-Rate. The E-Rate presents a unique opportunity to transform the way we teach and learn in the United States. We must take full advantage of this opportunity to give all of our children equal access to the Internet.

As the FCC contemplates the collection amounts for schools and libraries, I urge you to develop an ongoing mechanism which will fund the E-Rate at a level which meets demand and allows schools to plan for the long-term. We called upon our nation's schools and libraries to develop technology plans, acquire telecommunications expertise, and participate in the E-Rate application process. Every American should be proud that thirty thousand schools and libraries stepped up to the challenge. I hope the FCC will meet the full promise that the authors of the Telecommunications Act intended.

For example, the Darlington district in Wisconsin is anticipating 50 percent E-Rate discounts which will enable them to bring new technology into the classroom and enhance teacher in-service programs. Like many schools across the country, they worry that a reduced E-Rate fund could contribute to their students being left behind. A funding shortfall could chill further participation in the program by schools, libraries, and telecommunications providers. The ability of schools and libraries to engage in long-range technology planning will be hampered if the amount of funding is subject to change. Schools and libraries across the country are counting on receiving their discounts--we owe them nothing less.

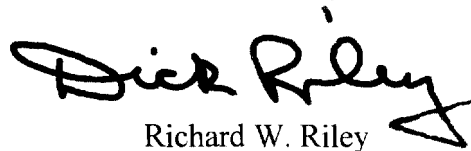
The E-Rate is a win-win for education and business. Telecommunications in schools will help to produce a generation of graduates who are technologically literate and well-prepared for jobs of the 21st century. Estimates have been made that a \$2 billion investment by the federal

Page 2 - Honorable William Kennard

government could spur up to \$6 billion for computer-related spending. This partnership between education and the telecommunications industry provides an excellent opportunity to assure our nation's long-term economic prosperity.

As with any new program, there are unknowns and challenges that need to be addressed along the way, but now is the time to fulfill the intention of the E-Rate which is to extend Universal Service to all schools and libraries. We must continue our commitment to educating our nation's children for the 21st century by ensuring that all of our children benefit from advanced telecommunications.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dick Riley", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard W. Riley

Enclosure

cc: Honorable Harold W. Furchtgott-Roth  
Honorable Susan Ness  
Honorable Michael K. Powell  
Honorable Gloria Tristani